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General Assembly
Fifty-fourth Session

Official Records

3rd plenary meeting
Friday, 17 September 1999, 11 a.m.
New York

President: Mr. Gurirab . . . . . (Namibia)

In the absence of the President, Mr. Baali (Algeria), Vice-President, took the Chair.

The meeting was called to order at 11.15 a.m.

Hurricane in the Bahamas

The Acting President: Before turning to our agenda for this morning, may I, on behalf of the Members of the General Assembly, and on my own behalf, extend to the Government and the people of the Bahamas, recently struck by hurricane Floyd, our deepest sympathy for the extensive material damage done to the country.

May I also express the hope that the international community will demonstrate its solidarity by responding promptly and generously to any request from these islands for assistance in their present plight.

Item 126 of the provisional agenda

Scale of assessments for the apportionment of the expenses of the United Nations (A/54/333)

The Acting President: I should like to inform Members that the President has been notified by the Secretariat that, since the issuance of the letter dated 14 September 1999 from the Secretary-General to the President of the General Assembly, (A/54/333), Equatorial Guinea has made the necessary payment to reduce its arrears below the amount specified in Article 19 of the Charter.

May I take it that the General Assembly duly takes note of this information?

It was so decided.

The Acting President: This information will be reflected in an addendum to document A/54/333.

Item 8 of the provisional agenda

Adoption of the agenda and organization of work: first report of the General Committee (A/54/250)

The Acting President: The Assembly will now consider the first report of the General Committee, which has been circulated in document A/54/250. I shall refer to specific sections and paragraphs of the report which contain recommendations for consideration by the Assembly.

In paragraph 2 of its report, the General Committee draws the attention of the General Assembly to the provisions reproduced in annexes V, VI, VII and VIII to the Assembly's rules of procedure.

May I take it that the Assembly takes note of those provisions?

It was so decided.

The Acting President: In paragraph 3 of its report the General Committee took note of annex I — entitled

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This record contains the original text of speeches delivered in English and interpretations of speeches delivered in the other languages. Corrections should be submitted to original speeches only. They should be incorporated in a copy of the record and be sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned, *within one month of the date of the meeting*, to the Chief of the Verbatim Reporting Service, Room C-178. Corrections will be issued after the end of the session in a consolidated corrigendum.

"Guidelines on the rationalization of the agenda of the General Assembly" — to General Assembly resolution 48/264 of 29 July 1994, entitled "Revitalization of the work of the General Assembly"; of the annex to General Assembly resolution 51/241 of 31 July 1997, entitled "Strengthening of the United Nations system"; and of paragraph 1 of resolution 52/163 of 15 December 1997, entitled "Amendment to rule 103 of the rules of procedure of the General Assembly". The provisions of the resolutions are reflected in the document before the General Assembly under the relevant sections.

In paragraph 4 of its report, the General Committee took note of the reports of the Secretary-General on the implementation of General Assembly resolutions 48/264 (A/52/856) and 51/241 (A/52/855).

We shall now examine section II of the report, which deals with the organization of the session.

We turn first to section II.B, which deals with the rationalization of work of the General Assembly.

In paragraph 7 of its report, the General Committee draws the attention of the General Assembly to paragraph 5 of the annex to resolution 45/45, on recommending that certain Main Committees should meet in sequential order.

May I take it that the General Assembly takes note of paragraph 7 of the report?

It was so decided.

The Acting President: In paragraph 8, the General Committee draws the attention of the Assembly to paragraphs 30, 31 and 36 of the annex to resolution 51/241, providing that the Main Committees should hold organizational meetings before the commencement of the general debate and meet in substantive sessions only after the end of the general debate; and that the First and Fourth Committees should meet, to the extent feasible, in a sequential manner.

May I take it that the Assembly takes note of paragraph 8?

It was so decided.

The Acting President: In paragraph 9, the General Committee took note of paragraph 1 of resolution 52/163, which amends the first sentence of rule 103 of the Rules of Procedure of the General Assembly to read as follows:

"Each Main Committee shall elect a Chairman, three Vice-Chairmen and a Rapporteur".

In paragraph 10, the General Committee took note of the fact that measures introduced to reduce costs relating to overtime would be strictly enforced.

We now turn to section II.C, on the closing date of the fifty-fourth session.

In paragraph 11, the General Committee took note that the fifty-fourth session of the General Assembly would close on Tuesday, 5 September 2000, and recommends to the General Assembly that the fifty-fourth session should recess no later than Tuesday, 14 December 1999.

May I take it that the Assembly approves that recommendation?

It was so decided.

The Acting President: Also in paragraph 11, the General Committee recommends to the Assembly that the First, Special Political and Decolonization (Fourth) and Sixth Committees should complete their work by Friday, 19 November; the Third Committee by Monday, 22 November; the Second Committee by Friday, 26 November; and the Fifth Committee by Friday, 10 December 1999.

May I take it that the Assembly approves the recommendation?

It was so decided.

The Acting President: Next, we turn to section II.D, concerning the schedule of meetings.

In paragraph 12, the General Committee recommends that morning meetings should start at 10 a.m. promptly for all plenary meetings and meetings of the Main Committees.

May I take it that the Assembly approves this recommendation?

It was so decided.

The Acting President: I should like to remind members that, for the afternoon meetings, I intend to begin promptly at 3 p.m.

In the same paragraph, the General Committee recommends that, as a cost-saving measure, plenary meetings and meetings of the Main Committees, including informals, be adjourned by 6 p.m. and that no meetings be held on weekends with the exception of the general debate. The Committee further recommends that this cost-saving measure should also apply, for the remainder of 1999, to meetings on the calendar of conferences and meetings of the United Nations.

May I take it that the Assembly approves this recommendation?

It was so decided.

The Acting President: In paragraph 13, the General Committee recommends that, in order to avoid the late start of meetings, the General Assembly should waive the requirement of the presence of at least one third of the members to declare a plenary meeting open and permit the debate to proceed, and of at least one quarter of the members to declare a meeting of a Main Committee open and permit the debate to proceed.

May I take it that the Assembly approves this recommendation?

It was so decided.

The Acting President: In this connection, I should like to endorse strongly the practical suggestion made at previous sessions, for each delegation to designate someone to be present at the scheduled time. I genuinely hope that all delegations will cooperate.

In paragraph 14, the General Committee recommends that delegations should be reminded of the utmost importance of punctuality.

May I take it that the Assembly approves this recommendation?

It was so decided.

The Acting President: In this regard, I should like to impress upon members that a 10-minute delay of the start of every meeting at Headquarters would result in a waste of $800,000 a year. I therefore sincerely hope that all delegations will make a special effort to cooperate in this regard, so that all meetings can start promptly at 10 a.m. and 3 p.m.

In section II.E, concerning the general debate, the General Committee took note that the general debate would be held from Monday, 20 September, to Saturday, 25 September 1999, and from Wednesday, 29 September to Saturday 2 October 1999.

In paragraph 16, the Committee draws the attention of the Assembly to paragraph 21 of the annex to resolution 51/241, where the Assembly indicated a voluntary guideline of up to 20 minutes for each statement in the general debate.

May I take it that the Assembly takes note of paragraph 16?

It was so decided.

The Acting President: In this regard, I should like to remind delegations of the request by the Secretariat that speakers deliver their statements at a normal speed within the given time-frame at all times to allow for proper interpretation.

In paragraph 17, the General Committee endorsed the suggestion by the Secretary-General that the list of speakers in the general debate be closed on Wednesday, 22 September, at 6 p.m.

In view of the very large number of speakers already inscribed on the list, I urge representatives to take the floor in the order in which they appear on the list of speakers in the general debate. Those who are unable to speak at the scheduled time will be put at the end of the list for that meeting.

In paragraph 18, the General Committee draws the Assembly's attention to a previous decision of the Assembly to strongly discourage the practice of expressing congratulations inside the General Assembly Hall after a speech has been delivered. The Committee recommends that this provision should also apply during the fifty-fourth session.

May I take it that the Assembly approves this recommendation?

It was so decided.

The Acting President: The General Committee also recommends that, after delivering their statements, speakers in the general debate should leave the General

Assembly Hall through room GA-200, located behind the podium, before returning to their seats.

May I take it that the Assembly also approves this recommendation?

It was so decided.

The Acting President: We shall now turn to section II.F. May I take it that the Assembly takes note of the provisions concerning explanations of vote and right of reply contained in paragraph 19?

It was so decided.

The Acting President: May I further take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to limit points of order to five minutes, as recommended in paragraph 20?

It was so decided.

The Acting President: In paragraph 21, in connection with the length of statements, the General Committee draws the attention of the General Assembly to paragraph 22 of the annex to resolution 51/241, which provides that outside the general debate, there shall be a 15-minute time limit in plenary meetings and in the Main Committees.

The President took the Chair.

The President: In paragraph 22, the Committee draws the attention of the Assembly to paragraph 23 of the report of the Secretary-General on the implementation of resolution 51/241 (A/52/855), which states that since in plenary meetings the length of statements in debates other than the general debate averages eight minutes, the General Assembly may wish to review the recommendation contained in paragraph 22 of the annex to resolution 51/241.

May I take it that the General Assembly takes note of paragraph 22?

It was so decided.

The President: May I take it that the Assembly takes note of the provisions regarding the length of statements contained in paragraph 23?

It was so decided.

The President: Section II.G deals with records of meetings.

In paragraph 24, the General Committee took note of the fact that verbatim records would be provided during the fifty-fourth session for the plenary meetings of the General Assembly and meetings of the First Committee and that summary records would be provided for the meetings of the General Committee and the other Main Committees of the Assembly.

May I take it that the Assembly approves the recommendation contained in paragraph 24 concerning transcriptions of the debates of some of the meetings of the Special Political and Decolonization Committee (Fourth Committee)?

It was so decided.

The President: May I take it that the Assembly approves the recommendation also contained in paragraph 24 that the practice not to reproduce *in extenso* statements made in a Main Committee be maintained for the fifty-fourth session?

It was so decided.

The President: Section II.H concerns concluding statements in the General Assembly and the Main Committees.

May I take it that the General Assembly takes note of this section?

It was so decided.

The President: Section II.I concerns resolutions.

May I take it that the General Assembly takes note of the provisions contained in paragraphs 26 to 29?

It was so decided.

The President: We turn now to section II.J, concerning documentation.

May I take it that the General Assembly takes note of the provision relating to reports of the Secretary-General or subsidiary organs contained in paragraph 30?

It was so decided.

The President: In paragraph 31, the General Committee draws the attention of the General Assembly to paragraph 5 of its resolution 48/264 and to paragraph 3 of its resolution 53/208 B of 18 December 1998, which emphasize that documentation be available in accordance with the six-week rule for the distribution of documents simultaneously in each of the six official languages of the General Assembly.

May I take it that the Assembly takes note of paragraph 31?

It was so decided.

The President: In paragraph 32, the General Committee draws the attention of the General Assembly to paragraph 32 of the annex to resolution 51/241 appealing to all bodies to exercise restraint in making proposals containing requests for new reports and to biennialize and triennialize the presentation of reports.

May I take it that the General Assembly takes note of this paragraph?

It was so decided.

The President: Section II.K refers to questions related to the programme budget.

May I take it that the General Assembly takes note of the provisions contained in paragraphs 33 to 35?

It was so decided.

The President: In paragraph 36, which concerns subparagraph 13 (d) of decision 34/401, the General Committee draws the Assembly's attention to the observations of the Secretary-General that the preparation of a statement of programme budget implications by the Secretary-General may take a few days. In addition, the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions and the Fifth Committee need adequate time to review the programme budget implications of a draft resolution before the draft resolution can be acted on by the Assembly.

The Secretary-General thus considers it desirable that Member States submit proposals sufficiently in advance to avoid the cancellation of meetings and the postponement of consideration of items.

May I take it that the Assembly takes note of the observations of the Secretary-General contained in paragraph 36?

It was so decided.

The President: In paragraph 37, the General Committee, at the suggestion of the Secretary-General, also draws the attention of the General Assembly to section VI of its resolution 45/248 B of 21 December 1990 on procedures for administrative and budgetary matters and to resolution 52/220 of 22 December 1997, by which the provisions of resolution 45/248 B were reaffirmed.

May I take it that the General Assembly takes note of the provisions contained in paragraph 37?

It was so decided.

The President: Section II.L concerns observances and commemorative meetings.

We turn first to paragraph 38. The General Committee recommends that, with the exception of the anniversary of the United Nations, the General Assembly should adopt the suggested format for commemorative meetings, including limiting each statement to 15 minutes.

May I take it that the Assembly approves the recommendations contained in paragraph 38?

It was so decided.

The President: May I take it that the Assembly also approves the recommendation contained in paragraph 39 regarding the rescheduling of observances and commemorative meetings?

It was so decided.

The President: I now invite the General Assembly to turn to section II.M, which refers to special conferences.

May I take it that the Assembly approves the recommendations referred to in paragraphs 40 and 41?

It was so decided.

The President: In section II.N, concerning meetings of subsidiary organs, the General Committee recommends to the General Assembly, on the strict understanding that meetings would have to be accommodated within available facilities and services, that the subsidiary organs referred to in paragraph 42 be authorized to meet during the main part of the fifty-fourth session.

May I take it that the General Assembly approves that recommendation?

It was so decided.

The President: We now turn to section III of the report of the General Committee, which contains observations on the organization of future sessions of the General Assembly. In paragraph 43, the General Committee draws the attention of the General Assembly to paragraph 17 of the annex to resolution 51/241, which states, *inter alia,* that the

> "plenary meetings of the General Assembly shall be formally opened every year on the first Tuesday following 1 September."

In this connection, the Committee also draws the attention of the Assembly to the report of the Secretary-General on the implementation of resolution 51/241 (A/52/855), in particular to paragraphs 16 and 17, which highlight the subsequent action that needs to be taken and the difficulty that will be encountered in implementing that provision. As stated in paragraph 17 of the Secretary-General's report, in recent years the closing date has been the Monday before the opening of the next session. Were the General Assembly to retain this practice, the closing date would consistently fall on an official holiday of the Organization, for which financial and other implications may need to be considered. Paragraph 17 of the report further states that the General Assembly may wish to decide on a closing date for future sessions that will fall on a working day.

In paragraph 44, the General Committee, noting the ad hoc decisions that had to be taken by the General Assembly concerning the opening and/or closing dates of the fifty-second, fifty-third, fifty-fourth and fifty-fifth sessions, recommends to the Assembly that it address, during its fifty-fourth session, the question of the opening and closing dates of future regular sessions with a view to deciding on a formula to determine the opening and closing dates of future regular sessions.

In paragraph 45, the General Committee, taking into account the opening date of the regular sessions, also recommends to the Assembly a review of the question of the mandatory deadline for the submission to the Fifth Committee of all draft resolutions having programme budget implications.

May I take it that the General Assembly takes note of paragraph 43 and approves the recommendations contained in paragraphs 44 and 45?

It was so decided.

The President: We now turn to section IV of the report of the General Committee, relating to the adoption of the agenda. It starts at paragraph 46.

I would first recall rule 23 of the rules of procedure, which provides that:

> "Debate on the inclusion of an item in the agenda, when that item has been recommended for inclusion by the General Committee, shall be limited to three speakers in favour of, and three against, the inclusion."

I should like to stress that at this time we are not discussing the substance of any item.

With regard to paragraph 47, may I consider that it is the wish of the Assembly to direct its Main Committees to review their agendas with a view to streamlining their programme of work as suggested in that paragraph?

I see no objection.

It was so decided.

The President: Again, may I urge members of the Assembly to give careful thought to the suggestion by the Secretary-General, taking into account especially paragraphs 23 to 26 of the annex to resolution 51/241, to consider deferring to a later session items for which decisions or action are not required at the present session.

In paragraph 48, the General Committee recommends that the consideration of item 96 of the draft agenda, "Question of the Malagasy islands of Glorieuses, Juan de Nova, Europa and Bassas da India", should be deferred to the fifty-fifth session and that the items

should be included in the provisional agenda of that session.

May I take it that the Assembly approves that recommendation?

It was so decided.

The President: In paragraph 49, in connection with item 166 of the draft agenda, "Commemoration of the tenth anniversary of the Convention on the Rights of the Child", the General Committee recommends its inclusion in the agenda of the current session. May I take it that the Assembly approves that recommendation?

It was so decided.

The President: In paragraph 50, in connection with item 168 of the draft agenda, "Cooperation between the United Nations and the Preparatory Commission for the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Organization", the General Committee recommends its inclusion in the agenda of the current session. May I take it that the Assembly approves that recommendation?

It was so decided.

The President: In paragraph 51, in connection with item 169 of the draft agenda, "Granting of observer status in the General Assembly for the Black Sea Economic Cooperation Organization", the General Committee recommends its inclusion in the agenda of the current session.

May I take it that the Assembly approves that recommendation?

It was so decided.

The President: In paragraph 52, in connection with item 170 of the draft agenda, "Observer status for the International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance in the General Assembly", the General Committee decided to defer the consideration of the inclusion of the item to a later date.

May I take it that the Assembly takes note of the decision of the General Committee on this item?

It was so decided.

The President: In respect of paragraph 53, the General Committee decided not to recommend the inclusion of item 171.

In paragraph 54, in connection with item 172 of the draft agenda, "Financing of the United Nations Mission in East Timor", the General Committee recommends the inclusion of this item in the agenda of the current session.

May I take it that the Assembly approves that recommendation?

It was so decided.

The President: In paragraph 55, in connection with item 173, "Armed aggression against the Democratic Republic of the Congo", the General Committee recommends the inclusion of this item in the agenda.

I call on the representative of Rwanda.

Mr. Mutaboba (Rwanda): I congratulate you, Sir, on your election to the presidency of the Assembly at this session.

I had occasion to indicate to the General Committee the delicate nature of the matter now before this body for consideration. I raised the argument that the process of peacemaking in the Democratic Republic of the Congo is well under way and that the United Nations, the countries of the Southern African Development Community (SADC), of which your country, Sir, is a distinguished member, the Organization of African Unity and Member States signatory to the Lusaka ceasefire agreement have done a lot of work in order to enhance the peace process in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. I argued that bringing this agenda item to the General Assembly would be shifting the crisis from the Great Lakes region to the General Assembly. I also argued that this matter is already before the International Court of Justice and that, as it is sub judice at The Hague, it should not be debated here. In addition to these arguments, I also raised procedural matters which I believe that the General Assembly should bear in mind before deciding on the inclusion of this item.

I want to raise the issue of rules 14 and 15 of the rules of procedure of the General Assembly. Rule 14 states that:

> "Any Member or principal organ of the United Nations or the Secretary-General may, at least thirty

days before the date fixed for the opening of a regular session, request the inclusion of supplementary items in the agenda. Such items shall be placed on a supplementary list, which shall be communicated to Members at least twenty days before the opening of the session."

Rule 15 refers to additional items such as the one which the Democratic Republic of the Congo has requested to be included on the agenda. They made the request on 8 September — this month. It was brought to the attention of the General Committee on 13 September, which is outside the time limit established by rule 14 of the rules of procedure of the General Assembly. I would like to raise the issue of rule 15 of the rules of procedure of the General Assembly so that you, Sir, can make a ruling and give guidance. I can assure you, Sir, that I do not doubt your impartiality in this matter.

Rule 15 reads:

"Additional items of an important and urgent character, proposed for inclusion in the agenda less than thirty days before the opening of a regular session or during a regular session, may be placed on the agenda if the General Assembly so decides by a majority of the members present and voting. No additional item may, unless the General Assembly decides otherwise by a two-thirds majority of the members present and voting, be considered until seven days have elapsed since it was placed on the agenda and until a committee has reported upon the question concerned."

I want it to be on record for historical purposes that the General Assembly at its fifty-fourth session would be violating its own rules of procedure if this agenda item were discussed at this session. I know that the General Assembly is sovereign in its own right, but it cannot be sovereign to the extent of overlooking its own rules.

The President: I would like to remind the representative of Rwanda that on the last day of the fifty-third session, on 13 September 1999, the General Assembly decided to include this item on the provisional agenda of the fifty-fourth session. Therefore rules 14 and 15 of the rules of procedure do not apply to the consideration of the question of the inclusion of this item. For members' information, rule 13 (c) governs the inclusion of this item in the provisional agenda. Rule 13 (c) is the rule that is applicable in this case.

Mr. Mwamba Kapanga (Democratic Republic of the Congo): I would first like to congratulate you, Sir, on your election to lead the work of the General Assembly during its fifty-fourth session.

I am not going to be long. I am just going to raise some of the concerns that we have with regard to what has been said by the representative of Rwanda. The first thing I would say is that the item was debated last year by the General Assembly despite the fact that the Security Council was considering or was dealing with this issue. And this year the General Committee met and agreed to include the item on the agenda. Now the item has already been adopted by the General Committee, and I would like to remind the Assembly of a rule that is very important: rule 22, which I am going to read in French since this is the only copy I have of the rules of procedure.

(*spoke in French*)

"Items on the agenda may be amended or deleted by the General Assembly by a majority of the members present and voting."

(*spoke in English*)

The item has already been adopted by the General Committee. For us to reject it would require engaging in another debate in which arguments and counter-arguments would have to be presented. This would certainly be time-consuming.

As regards some of the statements that were made by the representative of Rwanda, I would like to say the following. If peace were the objective of Rwanda, we would not have Rwandan soldiers reinforcing their positions and bringing in more troops and more guns to the central part of the Congo — more specifically, to Kabinda and Mashala. The first of these is in Eastern Kasai and the second one is in Western Kasai.

Rwanda signed the agreement in Lusaka on 10 July 1999. Rwanda made a commitment to respect the agreement it signed. Yet today we see that more guns, more troops are being brought to the Democratic Republic of the Congo. So here I just want to —

The President: I reque[illegible]e representative of the Democratic Republic of the Congo not to deal with the substance of the item. We are discussing its inclusion on the agenda, not the substance. Refrain from going back to the substance of the issue. We are talking about

inclusion, and I have read out the relevant rule applicable in this case — rule 13 (c).

Mr. Mwamba Kapanga (Democratic Republic of the Congo): I am sorry. I just want to say that, as far as my country is concerned, what we can say is that this item has already been adopted, accepted for inclusion on the agenda, and the Assembly should limit itself to this. We believe there is no point in changing anything. The item has been adopted, and the Bureau accepted it, and we should stick to that.

Ms. de Wet (Namibia): Namibia wishes to express its support for the recommendation of the General Committee that we decide to include on the agenda for this session item 173. My delegation understands that you, Sir, have informed this body that we need three speakers for the inclusion of the item and three against. In this regard Namibia wishes to express its support for the item's inclusion.

Mr. Van Schalkwyk (South Africa): South Africa likewise feels that this issue is of a sensitive nature. We feel we can abide by the decision of the General Committee. Like the previous delegate we would support keeping this issue on the agenda of the fifty-fourth session of the General Assembly.

The President: May I take it that the Assembly approves the recommendation?

It was so decided.

The President: We now turn to the agenda that the General Committee recommends for adoption by the General Assembly.

In accordance with past practice we will follow the numbering given in paragraph 56 of the General Committee's report, document A/54/250. Where it is deemed appropriate we shall consider items in groups.

Items 1 to 6 have already been dealt with.

We turn to items 7 to 51. May I remind delegations that we are dealing only with the question of the inclusion of the items. May I take it that these items are included in the agenda?

It was so decided.

The President: May I take it that items 52 to 63 are included in the agenda?

It was so decided.

The President: I now invite members to turn to items 64 to 85, relating to disarmament. May I take it that these items are included in the agenda?

It was so decided.

The President: Now we turn to items 86 to 96. May I take it that these items are included in the agenda?

It was so decided.

The President: Next, we come to items 97 to 105, relating to international economic issues. May I take it that these items are included in the agenda?

It was so decided.

The President: Items 106 to 116 relate to social and humanitarian questions. May I take it that these items are also to be included in the agenda?

It was so decided.

The President: Next may I take it that items 117 to 151, dealing with administrative and financial questions, are included in the agenda?

It was so decided.

The President: We now turn to items 152 to 161. If there is no objection, I will take it that these items are also included in the agenda.

It was so decided.

The President: We turn next to item 162, entitled "Observer status for the International Union for the Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources in the General Assembly". May I take it that item 162 is included in the agenda?

It was so decided.

The President: We turn next to items 163 and 164. May I take it that these items are included in the agenda?

It was so decided.

The President: We turn now to item 165, entitled "Commemoration of the tenth anniversary of the Convention on the Rights of the Child". May I take it that this item is included in the agenda?

It was so decided.

The President: Next we turn to item 166, entitled "Financing of the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo". May I take it that the Assembly recommends the inclusion of this item?

It was so decided.

The President: Next we turn to item 167, entitled "Cooperation between the United Nations and the Preparatory Commission for the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Organization". May I take it that this item is included in the agenda?

It was so decided.

The President: Next we turn to item 168, entitled "Granting of observer status in the General Assembly for the Black Sea Economic Cooperation Organization". May I take it that this item is included in the agenda?

It was so decided.

The President: Now we turn to item 169, entitled "Financing of the United Nations Mission in East Timor". May I take it that this item is included in the agenda?

It was so decided.

The President: We now turn to section V of the report of the General Committee, "Allocation of items". May I take it that the General Assembly takes note of the provisions contained in paragraph 57?

It was so decided.

The President: We now turn to the recommendations contained in paragraphs 59 to 62. We shall take up the recommendations one by one. Before we proceed, may I remind members that the item numbers refer to the agenda in paragraph 56 of the report before us, namely, document A/54/250.

We turn first to the recommendation in paragraph 59 (a), which concerns item 10. May I take it that the General Assembly approves that recommendation?

It was so decided.

The President: We turn next to the recommendation in paragraph 59 (b), relating to item 18. May I take it that the General Assembly approves that recommendation?

It was so decided.

The President: Next we turn to the recommendation in paragraph 59 (c), concerning item 52. May I take it that the General Assembly approves that recommendation?

It was so decided.

The President: In connection with paragraph 59 (d), relating to item 63, the General Committee recommends that the General Assembly allocate the item at an appropriate time during the session. May I take it that the General Assembly approves that recommendation?

It was so decided.

The President: We turn next to the recommendation in paragraph 59 (e), relating to item 96, entitled "Question of East Timor". May I take it that the General Assembly approves that recommendation?

It was so decided.

The President: We turn now to the recommendation in paragraph 59 (f), relating to item 99 (h), "Sustainable development and international economic cooperation: implementation of the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development". May I take it that the General Assembly approves the recommendation?

It was so decided.

The President: We turn now to the recommendation in paragraph 59 (g), relating to item 106, entitled "Social development, including questions relating to the world social situation and to youth, ageing, disabled persons and the family". May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to approve the recommendation pertaining to item 106?

It was so decided.

The President: We turn now to the recommendation in paragraph 59 (h), relating to item 109, "Advancement of women". May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to approve that recommendation?

It was so decided.

The President: We turn next to the recommendation in paragraph 59 (i), relating to item 154 (a), entitled "United Nations Decade of International Law". May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to approve that recommendation pertaining to item 154 (a)?

It was so decided.

The President: We turn now to the recommendation in paragraph 59 (j), relating to item 157, "Report of the Committee on Relations with the Host Country". May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to approve that the item be also considered directly in plenary meeting?

It was so decided.

The President: We turn now to the recommendation in paragraph 59 (k), relating to item 162, "Observer status for the International Union for the Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources in the General Assembly". May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to consider the item directly in plenary meeting?

It was so decided.

The President: We turn now to the recommendation in paragraph 59 (l), relating to item 165, "Commemoration of the tenth anniversary of the Convention on the Rights of the Child". May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to consider the item directly in plenary meeting?

It was so decided.

The President: I should like to recall that in their request for the inclusion of these new items the sponsors had suggested that the commemoration be held on 15 November 1999. May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to hold the commemoration on Monday, 15 November 1999?

It was so decided.

The President: Next we turn to the recommendation in paragraph 59 (m), relating to item 167, "Cooperation between the United Nations and the Preparatory Commission for the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Organization". May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to consider the item directly in plenary meeting?

It was so decided.

The President: We turn now to the recommendation in paragraph 59 (n), relating to item 168, "Granting of observer status in the General Assembly for the Black Sea Economic Cooperation Organization". May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to consider the item directly in plenary meeting?

It was so decided.

The President: We turn now to the recommendation in paragraph 59 (o), relating to item 170, "Armed aggression against the Democratic Republic of the Congo". May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to consider the item directly in plenary meeting?

It was so decided.

The President: We now turn to the recommendation in paragraph 60, relating to item 76, entitled "General and complete disarmament". May I take it that the General Assembly approves the recommendation pertaining to item 76?

It was so decided.

The President: Next we turn to the recommendation in paragraph 61, relating to item 109, entitled "Advancement of women". May I take it that the General Assembly approves this recommendation?

It was so decided.

The President: We turn now to the recommendation contained in paragraph 62, relating to item 169, entitled "Financing of the United Nations Mission in East Timor". May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly that the item should be allocated to the Fifth Committee?

It was so decided.

The President: We now turn to paragraph 63 of the report of the General Committee. As no member wishes

to speak, I invite the Assembly to turn to the list of items recommended by the General Committee for consideration in plenary meeting.

Taking into account the decisions we have just adopted, may I consider that the General Assembly approves the allocation of the items listed in paragraph 63 of the report of the General Committee for consideration directly in plenary meeting?

It was so decided.

The President: We now come to the list of items which the General Committee has recommended for allocation to the First Committee.

Taking into account the decisions just adopted, may I take it that the General Assembly approves the allocation of the items proposed for the First Committee in paragraph 63 of the report of the General Committee?

It was so decided.

The President: We turn now to the list of items which the General Committee recommends for allocation to the Special Political and Decolonization Committee, the Fourth Committee.

Taking into account the decisions just adopted, may I consider that the General Assembly approves the allocation of items proposed for the Special Political and Decolonization Committee in paragraph 63 of the report of the General Committee?

It was so decided.

The President: We come now to the list of items which the General Committee has recommended for allocation to the Second Committee.

May I consider that the General Assembly approves the allocation of items proposed for the Second Committee in paragraph 63 of the report of the General Committee?

It was so decided.

The President: We turn now to the list of items which the General Committee recommends for allocation to the Third Committee.

Taking into account the decisions just adopted, may I take it that the General Assembly approves the allocation of items to the Third Committee, as proposed in paragraph 63 of the report of the General Committee?

It was so decided.

The President: We turn now to the list of items which the General Committee recommends for allocation to the Fifth Committee.

Taking into account the decisions just adopted, may I take it that the General Assembly approves the allocation of items to the Fifth Committee as proposed in paragraph 63 of the report of the General Committee?

It was so decided.

The President: Lastly we come to the list of items which the General Committee recommends for the Sixth Committee.

May I take it that the General Assembly approves the allocation of items proposed for the Sixth Committee in paragraph 63 of the report of the General Committee?

It was so decided.

The President: The General Assembly has thus concluded its consideration of the first report of the General Committee. I wish to thank all the members of the Assembly for their cooperation.

Each main Committee will receive the list of agenda items allocated to it so that it may begin and organize its work in accordance with rule 99 of the rules of procedure and paragraphs 30 and 31 of the annex to resolution 51/241.

In addition, kindly note that the First Committee, Special Political and Decolonization Committee (Fourth Committee) and the Sixth Committee should complete their work by Friday, 19 November, the Third Committee by Monday, 22 November, the Second Committee by Friday, 26 November and the Fifth Committee by Friday, 10 December 1999.

I hope that the Main Committees will continue the effort they demonstrated in the fifty-third session in concluding their work on time.

I wish to recall and underline that all meetings must start punctually at 10 a.m. and at 3 p.m., and I personally intend to ensure that we all keep to our

commitment taken today. This undertaking also applies to the Secretariat, which must ensure that all documentation in all languages is available on time so that meetings can proceed without any delay.

I should now like to draw the attention of representatives to a matter concerning the participation of Palestine, in its capacity as observer, in the sessions and work of the General Assembly. Members will recall resolution 52/250 of 7 July 1998 and its annex, as well as a note by the Secretary-General contained in document A/52/1002 that outlines the Secretary-General's understanding of the implementation of the modalities annexed to the resolution.

I should like to draw the Assembly's attention in particular to paragraph 6 of the annex to resolution 52/250, which reads as follows:

> "The right to make interventions, with a precursory explanation or the recall of relevant General Assembly resolutions being made only once by the President of the General Assembly at the start of each session of the Assembly".

Accordingly, for the fifty-fourth session of the General Assembly, the observer of Palestine will therefore participate in the work of the General Assembly in accordance with resolution 3237 (XXIX) of the twenty-ninth session of 22 November 1974, resolution 43/177 of 15 December 1988 and resolution 52/250 of 7 July 1998, with no further need for a precursory explanation prior to any intervention by Palestine in this session.

The meeting rose at 12.25 p.m.